

NEW YORK HERALD.

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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AMUSEMENTS THIS EVENING.

NIBLO'S GARDEN, Broadway.—LEAH, THE FORKMAN.
WALLACE'S THEATRE, Broadway.—HARRIETTE.

WINTER GARDEN, Broadway.—HARLEY.

LAURA KEENE'S THEATRE, Broadway.—FAIR ONE
WITH THE GOLDEN LOCKS.—REPTILIAN PLE.NEW BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery.—EDGEMOUTH BEAS
—BLACK EYED SUSAN.—KING'S GARDENS.BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery.—WANDERING STEPHEN—
MOTHER GOOSE.—CARPENTER OF ROUSE.GERMAN OPERA HOUSE, 456 Broadway.—Joseph
in Egypt.BALDWIN'S AMERICAN MUSEUM, Broadway.—MINNIE
WALTON, CIVIL SERV. LITTLE HIPPOCRATES, &c., at all
hours.—COLLEEN BAWN.—Afternoon and Evening.BRYANT'S MINSTRELS, Mechanics' Hall, 472 Broad-
way.—ETHIOPIAN SONGS, DANCES, &c.—BLACK
BRIGADE.WOOD'S MINSTREL HALL, 514 Broadway.—ETHIOPIAN
SONGS, DANCES, &c.—RENNING THE BLOODED.BROADWAY MENAGERIE, Broadway.—LIVING WITH
ANIMALS.—PERFORMING ELEPHANTS—COLOSAL MILES, &c.AMERICAN THEATRE, No. 444 Broadway.—BALLET,
FANTASIES, BURLIQUIS, &c.PARISIAN CABINET OF WONDERS, 583 Broadway.—
Open daily from 10 A. M. till 10 P. M.HOOVER'S OPERA HOUSE, Brooklyn.—ETHIOPIAN
SONGS, DANCES, BURLIQUIS, &c.

New York, Wednesday, February 18, 1863

THE SITUATION.

Our news from the Army of the Potomac, though not very important, proves that active operations are going on. An expedition started for Belle Plain on Thursday last, to break up smuggling on the peninsula between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers, and to prevent the enforcement of the rebel conscript law. It returned yesterday, having accomplished its aims. The expedition consisted of two squadrons of the Eighth New York cavalry, commanded by Captain Moore; the Second Wisconsin infantry, Colonel Fairchild, supporting. A portion of the expedition proceeded as far as Westmoreland Court House, Warsaw, Union, the Hague and Heathsville, and marched about one hundred and fifty miles in five days, bringing back to camp twelve prisoners and a quantity of contraband goods smuggled across the Potomac; also four rebel mails and a large quantity of bacon. A large quantity of whiskey intended for rebel consumption was destroyed by our troops. A heavy snow storm was prevailing yesterday.

Our news from the Southwest is interesting. By a despatch from Cairo, dated Wednesday last, we learn that a Union scouting party met a body of the enemy five miles back of Lake Providence, when a warm engagement ensued. Our troops lost a few men. Many rebels were killed, and thirty-two taken prisoners. Ninety horses were captured.

It is stated in a despatch from Memphis that the rebels at Port Hudson are communicating with the Gulf by the Atchafalaya river. The same despatch says that "a million" bales of cotton are below Helena, Arkansas, waiting the permission of General Grant for shipment; but this is manifestly an error of the telegraph.

General Hindman's rebel army is reported as thoroughly demoralized. Three hundred of his troops were frozen to death during their retreat from Van Buren. Hindman was once ordered to Vicksburg, but his men refused to go. Upwards of two hundred deserters were concealed in the brush twenty miles from Batesville, which town, with a large majority of the people, is in favor of a permanent occupation of the country by the Union army.

A skirmish took place on the 13th instant, near Bolivar, Tenn., between a detachment of the First cavalry and a body of rebels, the result of which was four dead rebels, a number wounded, five prisoners and a number of horses captured. None of our men were killed.

The Cumberland river is twenty feet deep on the Shoals, and is still rising. It rained all night on Tuesday and all day yesterday, so that the river is likely to reach a high level.

The steamer Creole, Couch, master, from New Orleans on the 8th instant, arrived at this port yesterday forenoon. Her news, though not important, is of considerable interest. The planters of Louisiana are greatly exercised concerning the continual escapes of their slaves, and have held an important meeting at New Orleans in reference to the labor question, the details of which will be found in our correspondence. The reports concerning the escape of the Harriet Lane are denied by an officer who saw her, and who says she was so much injured as to be unfit for service.

The British barkentine Rosalind, of Liverpool, Gardner, master, arrived at St. Thomas on the 27th ultimo, from Wilmington, North Carolina, with the following cargo:—24 bbls. rosin, 265 bbls. spirits of turpentine, 172 bales cotton and 23 boxes tobacco. The Rosalind cleared on the 16th and ran the blockade on the 18th ult.

CONGRESS.

In the Senate yesterday, joint resolution was introduced authorizing the collection of foreign postage in coin. The bill reorganizing the Engineer Corps was reported back by the Military Committee. The bill to prevent members of Congress and agents and officers of the government from taking any consideration for procuring place, office or contracts was passed. The Finance Committee reported back the Fortification Appropriation bill without amendment. Resolutions recently adopted at a public meeting at the Cooper Institute, in New York City, relative to the colonization of Florida, were presented. The bill authorizing letters of marque and reprisal was taken up, and after some debate a substitute was offered by Mr. Gilman and adopted, authorizing the President, in all domestic and foreign wars, to issue letters of marque, and make all needful regulations relating thereto. An amendment was adopted limiting the authority conferred by the act to three years. The bill was then passed by a vote of twenty-seven against nine. A resolution was adopted respecting the Secretary of the Treasury to inform the Senate what steps have been taken by him to investigate the alleged fraudulent transactions in the New York Custom House. The Naval Appropriation bill was reported back by the Finance Committee. A bill to facilitate proof for allowance of pensions was passed. A bill to guarantee to certain States a republican form of government was introduced. A bill to give greater efficacy to the judiciary system was

passed. An executive session was held, and the Senate adjourned.

In the House of Representatives the Military Committee were instructed to inquire into the efficiency of the medical department of the army under General Grant, and to report what legislation is necessary to secure the utmost possible skill and attention in the care of the sick and wounded soldiers. The Indian Appropriation bill was passed. A bill relative to the Indian trust funds was introduced. A resolution was offered instructing the Committee on the Judiciary to inquire and report what are the powers and duties of Judge Peabody, of New Orleans, whether prescribed by the law or the President, and whether the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy has power thus to appoint civil judges. Objection was made, and the resolution lies over. The Louisiana election cases were then taken up, and the report declaring Messrs. Flanders and Hahn entitled to seats adopted by a vote of ninety-two against forty-four. Mr. Hahn immediately entered upon his duties; but Mr. Flanders was absent. The report of the Committee on Elections, adverse to the claim of Mr. McKenzie, of Virginia, was adopted. The Senate's amendments to the bill providing ways and means for the support of the government were all acted on, and the House adjourned.

THE LEGISLATURE.

In the State Senate yesterday some few bills were passed, among which were those to appropriate a portion of the Literature fund for the benefit of Academies and to apply the proceeds of the State tax to the support of the public schools. The bill to require the Central and Erie railroads to make monthly and yearly reports of their freight business received a favorable report, and was afterwards recommitted for the purpose of hearing objections. A favorable report was also made on the bill for incorporating Catholic churches. The House resolutions inviting General McClellan to visit Albany as the guest of the State were laid on the table by fourteen yeas to nine nays. The privileges of the floor were voted to General Corcoran. The report of the commissioners on the damages at Quarantine was presented. The bill to extend the time for the collection of taxes was considered in Committee of the Whole and ordered to a third reading. Some local and private bills were acted upon.

In the Assembly several bills were considered in Committee of the Whole, but none of them of general interest. A communication was received from the State Comptroller, covering one from Comptroller Brennan, of this city, in reference to some of the city banks declining to pay State tax, on the ground that their capital is invested in United States stocks, which, by act of Congress, are exempt from taxation. General Corcoran, who was present in the Capitol, was, by a vote of the House, invited to a place on the floor. On the appearance of the General he was greeted with applause, and was addressed by the Speaker. General Corcoran made a short but appropriate speech in reply.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS.

The steamship City of Washington, which left Queenstown on the 5th instant, is due at this port to-day. Her news will be four days later than the advice of the Asia.

The British ship Victory, which arrived at this port yesterday morning, from Liverpool, has on freight 867 bales of rags.

A meeting was held in Galway, Ireland, on the 30th of January, to devise means for relieving the people of that city who are suffering from want of employment. Resolutions were passed expressing a hope that the government would provide useful works to aid them, and especially by enabling them to improve the harbor for the accommodation of the American steamers.

We have dates from Comayagua, Honduras, to the 11th of December. The *Gaceta Oficial* announces the death of Senor Don Victoriano Castellanos, Vice President of the republic, on that day. Dispositions were made immediately for the embalming of his remains and their interment in the Capilla del Sagrario of the Catholic cathedral of the city. A solemn mass was to be performed and a statue of the deceased erected, in consideration of his long and useful public services.

Among other obituary notices in the Jamaica papers, we find the name of the late United States Consul to Kingston, Jamaica.

The Democratic State Convention of Connecticut will be held to-day at Hartford, to nominate candidates for State offices.

The Democratic party of Kentucky will hold their State Convention to-day in the city of Frankfort. Candidates for Governor and other State offices are to be nominated for the August election.

A mass convention will be held at Indianapolis on the 26th inst., at which Gov. Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, will be one of the speakers.

The Board of Supervisors met yesterday. A message was received from the Mayor, returning without his approval the ordinance making appropriations for the expenses of the county government for the ensuing year, on the ground that some of the appropriations were extravagant. The first item objected to is one of \$39,600 for advertising, and the message recommends that the advertising be given to two papers of largest circulation, instead of uselessly squandering money on papers of small circulation. The message next objects to the item of \$201,250 for the construction of Harlem river bridge, "that sum being \$68,000 more than was asked for by the Bridge Commissioners." Another item objected to is \$30,000 "to the appropriation for salaries in the executive department." Supervisor Tweed moved the publication of the veto in the *Herald*, *Transcript* and *Times*. Supervisor Purdy suggested the *Herald* alone, on account of its large circulation. It was finally referred to a committee, with power. Adjourned to Tuesday at three o'clock.

The Democratic Union Association held their usual meeting last evening. Mr. Norton, Rev. Mr. Benedict, of Buffalo, and Mr. Mahony, of Dubuque, Iowa, spoke on the occasion. The attendance was not so large as on former occasions.

The Board of Aldermen met yesterday afternoon at one o'clock, President Walsh in the chair. A resolution was offered by Alderman Boole, and adopted, to the effect that the sum of \$14,000 is due by George Law for rent of piers Nos. 41, 42 and 43 North river, and the sum of \$116,950 from Meserole & Donoghue, for the rent of the Peck slip and Grand street ferries, and that the Corporation Counsel be requested to inform the Board what proceedings have been taken to recover the amounts due. The sum of \$5,000 was appropriated for the celebration of Washington's birthday, and the sum of \$500 was appropriated to purchase from Henry B. Dawson a number of documents relating to the Revolutionary history of the country. In reply to a resolution of the Board, the Comptroller sent in a communication stating that a suit has been commenced against the Peck Slip Ferry Company. The President nominated Aldermen Masterson, Clapp, Reed, Boole and Ottwell a special committee to investigate the alleged frauds in relation to the purchase of the Fort Gansevoort property. The Board adjourned to Thursday next, at one o'clock.

In the Court of General Sessions yesterday, before Recorder Hoffman, Charles Edwards, a New York butcher, twenty-eight years of age, was convicted of burglary in the third degree, and sentenced to the State Prison for four years and six months.

Counterfeit five dollar bills on the Union Bank of Haverhill, New York, are in circulation.

The new steamship Fair-ke, built for Waimore & Cryder, for the China trade, has been purchased by Adams' Express Company, and will at once

take her place on the line between New Bedford, N. C., and Port Royal, S. C. She leaves for the latter named ports on Saturday, at two P. M.

The market for beef cattle was very irregular this week, and changed some two or three times materially. On Monday the market opened very firm and buoyant, under moderate supplies and a good demand; but subsequent arrivals unsettled the market, and caused prices to decline $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢, a $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢, per pound, at which the bulk of the sales were effected. The market ruled dull and heavy until near the close yesterday, when a more active demand sprang up—superinduced by the indications of a snow storm—and the yards were speedily emptied. Prices varied from $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢, to $\frac{5}{8}$ ¢, a 10¢, but extras sold as high as 12¢. The general selling prices were 8¢, a 9¢, and the average about 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢, a 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢. Milch cows were steady at \$25 to \$40 a \$50. Veals were steady at $\frac{4}{5}$ ¢, to $\frac{6}{5}$ ¢, a 7¢. Sheep and lambs were more plenty, and 25¢, a 37¢, per head lower. Prices ranged from \$4 25 to \$7 18, and \$9 for extras. Swine were in steady, fair demand at 5¢, a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢, for corn fed and 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢, a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢, for still fed. The total receipts were 5,275 hogs, 123 cows, 366 veals, 8,543 sheep and lambs and 21,596 swine.

Speculation in stocks and gold was again active yesterday, and prices were generally higher, with a considerable increase of business. Gold rose to 150 $\frac{1}{2}$, closing 150 $\frac{1}{2}$ bid. Exchange rose to 117 $\frac{1}{4}$. Money was easy at 6 per cent. The trade tables for the month of January and the current fiscal year to date will be found in the money article.

There was a further improvement in the breadstuffs market yesterday; four advanced 10¢, wheat 1¢, a 2¢, and corn 1¢, with a good business, particularly in flour. The sales of most kinds of provisions were large, at rising prices, and there was more doing in groceries and most kinds of foreign merchandise at former rates. The cotton market was extremely dull and prices were nominal. Whiskey was less active at dropping figures. The freight engagements were heavier, with some depression in rates in American vessels.

The Calm Before the Storm.—The Gathering Elements of the Final Struggle.

Never, since the bombardment of Fort Sumter, has there been such a general and remarkable suspension of active hostilities as that which now prevails, by land and water, around the entire circle of the rebellion. Under an armistice, authoritatively proclaimed, this suspension of battles and skirmishes, raids and surprises, could hardly be more complete. We hear no more of daring and successful rebel forays in the rear of the Army of the Potomac; no more of dashing guerrilla enterprises in Kentucky and Missouri; no more of damaging rebel depredations upon the trains and transports of General Rosecrans, since the late disastrous repulse of Forrest, Wheeler, Morgan & Company from Fort Donelson. Nor, from our widely distributed land and naval forces, from the Rappahannock westward to the Mississippi, and thence down that great river to the sea, and thence around the coast to Chesapeake Bay, have we heard for several days of any assault upon the enemy beyond that of the chance collision of a scouting party.

What is the meaning of this extraordinary state of things? Are the hostile forces in this war wearied of their work of slaughter, and are they falling to pieces from sheer exhaustion?—or are they voluntarily pausing in expectation of some interposing agencies of a peaceable accommodation?—or are the Unionists and the rebels, here and there, quietly concentrating their available forces for a deadly and decisive struggle? Let the enormous Union fleets and armies in South Carolina and in front of Vicksburg, and the Army of the Potomac, and our army of Tennessee, and let the fortifications and forces opposed to them, be the answer. The leaders of the rebellion have concentrated their strength at four points: 1st, on the heights of the Rappahannock in front of General Hooker; 2d, at Charleston; 3d, at Vicksburg; 4th, in Tennessee, in front of the army of General Rosecrans; and upon the repulse or the successful defence of the enemy at these four points depends the important question whether this war will be ended by the present or be transmitted as the legacy of Abraham Lincoln to our next administration.

The rebel army of Virginia is charged with the defence of the capital of the so-called "Confederate States." General Lee remains behind his intrenchments, watching and waiting, to resist any attempt on the part of General Hooker to move "on to Richmond." But General Hooker has found his most serious impediment to an advance in the "sacred soil of Virginia," which for two months has been, and still continues, almost as boggy and impassable as the Dismal Swamp. We must have a few successive days of dry winds on the Rappahannock before even "Fighting Joe Hooker" can move in any direction. In the meantime, as the inland railroad line from Washington to Richmond was abandoned by General Burnside to avoid the danger of having his transportation cut off by rebel forays, why is it that the sixty miles of railroad between General Lee's army and Richmond should remain unbroken and undisturbed? Have we no cavalry connected with the Army of the Potomac equal to some such undertaking as that so handsomely carried out by General Carter and his troop of horsemen in East Tennessee? The capture of Richmond would be a blow to "the heart of the rebellion." The readiest way to reach it is to dislodge the intrenched army of Lee, and the readiest way to dislodge him is to cut him off from the base of his scanty supplies.

The forces of the Port Royal expedition of November, 1861, might have taken Richmond by way of Norfolk while the rebel army was at Manassas; or, had the whole strength of that expedition been directed against Charleston immediately after the capture of Port Royal, we have no doubt that it would have been completely successful. But the Charleston of February, 1863, is not the Charleston of November, 1861. The intervening time has been appropriated by the rebels in the erection of a system of defensive works around the city which it will probably require a protracted siege, by land and water, to reduce. Two months hence the pestilence of the surrounding swamps begins to poison the air, so that General Hunter must proceed to business against Charleston or Savannah without further delay, or he may be compelled to leave his work half finished, to be commenced again at the beginning, with the return of cold weather.

We may, however, hear of the opening of the ball at Vicksburg or Port Hudson before we shall have any news of the bombardment of Charleston; and we confidently expect that, between General Grant and Admiral Porter from above, and General Banks and Admiral Farragut from below, the Mississippi river will soon be entirely reclaimed. But with the dispersion of the rebels from that "inland sea" in advance of any decisive operations elsewhere, it is to be hoped that the enemy will not again be permitted, as at Corinth, to abandon one position in order to strengthen another, but that Rosecrans, Hooker and Hunter will each

anticipate any strategy of this sort by prompt and decisive action.

We believe that our forces in Virginia, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee are fully equal in every case to the work assigned them; and we believe, too, that the golden moment for action is at hand. The despondency of Wall street, the revolutionary tendencies of the spoils democracy and abolition fanatics of the North, and the fears and distrust pervading the public mind, imperiously demand "military success." The government has the men and means and the opportunity to secure success, and the country has the right to demand it. We are gratified to hear that encouraging accounts from our military officers in the field, East and West, have created a more hopeful feeling in Washington, and we trust that this feeling will be soon extended to New York, with the news of some decisive Union victory as the opening of the impending campaign.

William Colorado Jewett's Letter to the President.

William Colorado Jewett has had his *carte de visite* taken. This announcement may seem unimportant; but Jewett is no ordinary man, and his *carte de visite* is no ordinary photograph. The ghosts of the great departed hovered around the operator's camera, and the operator himself was a spiritualist of the first water. The consequence was that the shades of those illustrious worthies, dead and alive, who inspire Jewett in his great work of mediation, were impressed upon the photographer's negative, and are distinctly visible in Jewett's *carte de visite*. In one of the pictures before us Napoleon the First stands majestically by Jewett's side; in another Luther smiles upon Jewett's efforts; in a third Melancthon; in a fourth Queen Victoria; in a fifth the Emperor of Russia, and in a sixth Talleyrand, are seen at Jewett's right hand, in gloomy and impressive grandeur, evidently aiding and abetting his mediation and mining schemes. Thus, by this spiritualistic photography, we behold not only Jewett's handsome face and elegant figure, but are also favored with a *fac simile* of Jewett's soul, and learn that it is composed of the souls of all these immortals, and that they actually possess and speak through him.

We desire to call most particular attention, therefore, to the letter which Jewett has recently addressed to President Lincoln, and which we publish in another column this morning. We always thought Colorado Jewett a great man; but we now discover that he is half a dozen great men and women rolled into one. Whatever he says must consequently be of the utmost importance, as he embodies in words not only his own private opinions, but those of Napoleon, Luther, Queen Victoria and the rest. He is not merely blowing his own trumpet; but he is himself a trumpet through which emperors, kings, queens and sages declare their combined wisdom to the world. There is not the slightest doubt of the genuineness of this last spiritual manifestation. Jewett's letter establishes beyond question the fact that he is possessed. Its solemn tone, its mysterious mannerisms, its oracular style, its apparent contradictions and its prophetic warnings are but so many proofs that it was dictated by mighty minds, far removed from the realms of common sense. Indeed, its contradictions seem to us the very best evidences of its supernatural origin. The shades of Napoleon and the Emperor of Russia never could agree. Queen Victoria, the head of the English church, would certainly differ upon some points with the reforming Luther. The mild Melancthon and the intriguing Talleyrand are not likely to divide a soul between them without a little controversy. If, therefore, Jewett pitches into the emancipation proclamation at the commencement of his letter and rather favors it at the close, that is only the result of a little difficulty between Napoleon, who, as a military ghost, knows that the proclamation will not end the war, and the Emperor of Russia, who is now involved in emancipation troubles of his own, and desires to see us in the same puddle. If Jewett argues in favor of peace and yet avows himself a war man, Queen Victoria and Luther are at fault. If Jewett urges mediation in the name of Heaven on the one hand, and tries to oust Seward and nominate a new Cabinet on the other, that is a matter for which the contending and opposing influences of Melancthon and Talleyrand are to blame. Jewett cannot help these little muddles. When a man is full of spirits his brains and his pen are equally unmanageable.

It will probably surprise many readers that the souls of Greeley, Vallandigham, Louis Napoleon and Mercier are not among those photographed upon Jewett's *carte de visite*. The natural explanation of this omission is that Louis Napoleon and Mercier are represented by Napoleon the First, and that Greeley and Vallandigham have either no souls at all or souls so small as to be undiscernible. But, though absent from the photographs, there is enough of these personages in the letter to the President. Vallandigham speaks through Jewett against emancipation. Mercier and his master speak through Jewett in favor of mediation. Greeley, and all the radical, abolition, disunion cabal speak through Jewett in his attack upon Seward, and through Senator Sumner when he declares that Seward's recent patriotic and statesmanlike reply to the offer of French mediation is "the weakest document of the administration" and "an absurdity." Jewett is the agent of these radicals, and they use him, as the monkey did the cat, to try and get their political chestnuts from the fire. As none of the great men of this country—Washington, Jackson, Webster—appear in Jewett's *carte de visite*, so none of their sentiments inspire the party who put him forward to feel public opinion. His inspiration is from foreigners. There is no Americanism about this mediation movement. We hope that President Lincoln will say as much when he answers Jewett's letter. The President will answer it, of course, as he replied to Greeley's letter a short time ago, and Jewett is not half so great a fool as Greeley. In fact, when all that is mysterious about Jewett comes to be explained, the country will find that he is one of the smartest men of the day, and knows how to feather his own nest comfortably and snugly. Mediation may go down; but Colorado mines will go up; and Jewett holds shares in both concerns. Up to the present time his modesty has been his misfortune. Having managed Colorado as he has, he might well nominate himself for the Treasury Department; but he recommends Robert J. Walker instead. Perhaps, however, he is holding himself back for some higher object. A person inspired by Napoleon the Great cannot be without ambi-

tion. We doubt that he would accept the Presidency—and that he could be elected even if he would accept it. The people are not yet sufficiently educated to understand and appreciate his merits. But there is an office which Jewett would be willing to fill, and for which we can cordially support him. When the radical republicans and the peace democrats, led by Greeley and Vallandigham, and working harmoniously together, at last succeed in referring our civil war to foreign arbitration, then let us have no ministers or ambassadors from France, Russia and England to decide our fate; but let William Colorado Jewett, the representative, not only of these three great Powers, but of all other Powers, past, present and to come, be selected as sole judge, mediator and arbitrator, and dictate our destiny. And let all the people say, Amen!

Our Harbor and Coast Defences.

We have lowering over us the prospect of a war with one of the most powerful nations of Europe. Are we preparing for such an emergency? No. Our harbors are totally undefended against the advent of the strongly plated, formidable war vessels of Napoleon, which, in case of a war between this country and France, would surely seek to enter our harbors and bombard our great seaports. Some few months back we were almost brought into actual conflict with England; and any one more comprehending than President Lincoln decided to hold the traitor Mason and Slidell, the people of the North would have thrown up their caps and shouted for war. We were totally unprepared then to repel the assaults of England's armored men-of-war. Now, when at any moment we may hear that Napoleon has recognized the Davis government, and that our administration considers such an act a declaration of war, we are no more prepared to repel the attacks of France than we were those of England.

And yet for months the possibility of a foreign war has been discussed in this journal, and reiterated, demands made by us that our harbor and coast defences should be carefully attended to. We need iron-clad forts to command the narrow channels which approach our harbor. We need immense and heavily armed floating batteries to render our defence the more secure, and we should at once, without a moment's loss of time, procure them. We have ample experience of the efficiency of armored forts and batteries. In Charleston harbor our shells rebounded from the hastily and imperfectly iron-clad batteries of the rebels without making any impression upon them. But a few days since one of our most formidable iron men-of-war, the Montauk, fought for hours with the iron-clad Fort Moultrie, and found it almost as invulnerable as herself. We know that Napoleon has caused all the forts which line the coasts of France to be heavily armored, and that thus he has rendered them impregnable. England is following his example. The rebels use all haste in making their forts and batteries safe by putting iron armor upon them, and it is only we of the North who idly wait for the moment when a powerful and determined enemy shall strike us. Are we forsaken by Providence, or are we mad? Will no experience suffice to render us alive to our danger? Our enemies eagerly seize upon all methods to render their attack the more deadly. We await their onslaught with a supineness which is really becoming incomprehensible.

We call upon our administration to take some immediate steps in this matter. We must have our great commercial cities safe from the attack of any enemy who might be taken with the fancy to lay them in ashes. Small forts, heavily clad with iron and armed with our immense ordnance, would render our city perfectly safe. But, then, we must have these forts, and, until they can be constructed, batteries, however rudely and hastily thrown up, must be made. We cannot remain idle, awaiting, nay, inviting, the assault of an enemy. We must prepare for all contingencies; and if the government cannot attend to this imperative necessity the people of New York and other seaports must themselves see that proper defences are immediately erected.

A mere accident saved us from the fearful havoc which the Merrimac would undoubtedly have committed had not the Monitor—a private enterprise—appeared just at the nick of time to save the government from immense loss and the people from shameful reverses. The event should have taught wisdom to our Navy Department. It did not, however. The government should have profited thereby. That it did not we are at liberty to assert, as we now find ourselves upon the point of a foreign war, while our defences are totally inadequate to save us from its direful results. We must, we fear, as in the case of the Monitor, put our trust in our own exertions, and leave the government to its blunders and inefficiency. Let the people, then, take the matter in their own hands, and let us have our harbors and coasts rendered impregnable. Self-preservation is a first law. New York, the second, if not the first, commercial city in the world, is as open to the attack of an enemy as though iron-clad batteries and forts were things as yet unheard of. Had we begun two months since to render our harbor safe from all assaults, to-day the thing would have been accomplished. There is no time to be lost. Those who have material interests in the safety and prosperity of this city must look to its defences. Let us prepare. By so doing we will the more likely avoid the calamity.

THE CONTRABANDS, AND WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH THEM.—A correspondent of one of the radical journals of this city writes from Cairo in a mostlachrymose strain about the manner in which "the freed" negroes are treated there. There are seventeen hundred of them crowded in the "corral," and their quarters are in the midst of mud two feet deep, and cleanliness is as much out of the question as it would be in a pigsty. Hence disease of every kind, particularly pneumonia, is fast thinning their ranks. Last week over sixty died, and this is the usual average. The writer adds that they are rotting and dying "for want of exercise," and he is loud in his denunciations of the "beastly State of Illinois," destitute of "humanity, decency, civilization, Christianity and sense," because, with her millions of acres of uncultivated prairie land, she does not offer the contrabands a home.

Why should the blacks starve in Illinois when they can be made useful at Vicksburg? General Rosecrans understands the question. He compels the negroes to labor in his trenches, and thus saves his troops. Why do not the other generals imitate his example? The cutting of the canal at Vicksburg is delayed for want of men; and because the work is

done by the soldiers, when fifty thousand negroes ought to be sent there, who would finish it before the rebels would have time to build fortifications opposite its mouth, below Vicksburg, and so defeat its purpose. Thus could the adult male negroes be made to earn subsistence for their families, instead of being a burthen upon the War Department, already bowed down with a load greater than it can bear. The anti-slavery fanatics will soon find out, if they have not already discovered, how fatal has been their agitation to the unfortunate blacks, as well as to the white race.

THE COTTON QUESTION FROM A FRENCH POINT OF VIEW.—If we are to credit the statements in a letter recently received in Washington, from a gentleman who has been visiting the principal cotton manufacturers at Lille and other towns in France, the distress said to prevail among the French operatives is greatly exaggerated. In Lille and its dependencies, which run 1,200,000 spindles, or a little less than one-quarter the whole number in France, every mill is in operation, and there are no workmen out of employ. Of course it is not denied that in other manufacturing centres, where the coarser yarns or tissues are used, and where labor enters for much the largest proportion of the cost, considerable suffering exists. The lack of orders and general condition of uncertainty in their business in these places are, however, attributed by the manufacturers as much to the French treaty of commerce with England and the enormous stocks of cloths and yarns which had been accumulating for years through over manufacture as to the American war. In reply to an inquiry from the writer as to whether he was desirous for peace and an opening of the cotton ports, one of them emphatically said:—

As a man, yes—as a manufacturer, no. The throwing into the markets of the world a couple of million bales of cotton would cause immense and widespread perturbation and disaster. The same speculative spirit which has now stimulated a rise in cotton beyond its value would equally exaggerate, in a contrary sense, the supply. The result would be a panic, a prodigious fall in the prices of goods, and ruin to manufacturers and merchants holding large stocks of goods.

This is the view that we have all along taken of this question, and the conviction of which has led to such a reaction of sentiment amongst the English manufacturers and operatives. The latter have learned to appreciate the fact that the American war hastened, but did not create, the order of suffering through which, sooner or later, they were destined to pass, and that their difficulties would only be increased by its sudden termination. The manufacturers, who are growing enormously rich by the disposal of their long accumulated stocks, feel that it would even be better for them to support their operatives for a while in idleness than to assist in putting a premature end to a state of things which assures them both present and future prosperity. Louis Napoleon is no more blind than they are to the actual causes of the sufferings of the French operatives, or to the small chances which exist of peace terminating them; but he makes use of them as a means of carrying out his political designs on this continent. In this, however, he may overreach himself; for, though the press is shackled in France, the manufacturers, as a class, have an interest in making the true state of the case understood. Should disaster attend his military operations in Mexico, the dishonest course that he is pursuing in our regard will help to precipitate that downward course towards which his inordinate ambition is hurrying him.

FATAL ACCIDENTS FROM STREET OBSTRUCTIONS.—The finding of the Coroner's jury which sat upon the inquest in the case of Julia O'Meara, the poor apple woman, who was run over and killed by Engine Company No. 42, has excited very general surprise. There is a law prohibiting the fire companies from using the sidewalks of the city except when, in winter, the centres of the thoroughfares become impassable from snow. The Coroner took a superficial view of the hearing of this enactment, and, in his remarks to the jury, held that nobody was to blame, the streets being in a bad condition, and consequently entitling the fire company to do what was usual on such occasions. They accordingly found a verdict exonerating all concerned. Now it seems to us that this is a very curious charge and finding. Blame clearly attaches somewhere—if not to the fire company, certainly to the city authorities. When the streets are obstructed, as in this case, the firemen should be allowed to use the sidewalks, but it is the business of the city to keep the public thoroughfares free from impediments, and, omitting to do so, it should be held liable for all accidents occurring through its negligence. The Coroner failed in his duty in not directing the jury in this sense; but the family of the deceased woman have not the less a legal claim against the Corporation, if they choose to enforce it.

THE NAVY.

KOONCE, 2.—Whitney's battery Koonce has had a new connecting valve put on board, and is now nearly ready for sea. She will be completed next week, and the authorities regard her as one of the most valuable vessels of our iron clad fleet. The statement that she had not sufficient means of egress from the engine room is erroneous. Capt. Rhine will command her. The boiler of this vessel has asked permission to accompany her South, so great is his faith in her efficiency.

JENKINS, 10, regular heavy built corvette—sailed, for the fourth time, from Philadelphia on Monday. It has now been ascertained that it is the hull with which there is so much trouble, and that the imperfections of the machinery are of a secondary character. So the cruises of Mr. Isherwood have lost one great plank in their platform. The success of the Lackawanna is also a fact that seriously interferes with their calculations. There are indications that the eleven and fifteen inch guns, hitherto regarded as monstrous in their way, will be eclipsed by ordnance of twice their size. Contrabands have already been made twenty-five and thirty inch guns, and experiments are making for twenty-four and thirty inch guns. This, with gunboats, will at least show the progress of war on land and sea. Firing guns by electricity is another of the experiments of the few days past.

Commander Preble, who was cashiered, is reinstated and under orders for active service.

THE ARMY.

The headquarters of the Twelfth United States Infantry have been transferred from Fort Hamilton to the field. Lieutenant P. M. Minnick, regimental adjutant, and Drum Major William Love, with a drum and life corps and a detachment of recruits, passed through Washington on Friday morning. Major L. B. Bruen, the junior major of the regiment, remains at Fort Hamilton to superintend the recruiting service for the regiment.

Six or eight officers of the Fourth United States Infantry, who for several months past have been recruiting and equipping regiments in New York, Massachusetts, Vermont and elsewhere, have been ordered to join their regiment in the field. Among these officers are Captain S. M. Sprule, for many times executive officer and commanding the permanent party on Governor's Island; Captain V. H. Bates, and Lieutenant John Miller, recruiting officers in Christian street.

Captain Balch has been relieved by Captain Wm. Dickinson, Third Infantry.

The Emancipation Question in West Virginia Convention.